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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8038th meeting
Wednesday, 30 August 2017, 4 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Cheng Lie
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Melki
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	Ukraine	Mr. Ilnytskyi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

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The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to express appreciation to you, Mr. President, and your team for all the hard work throughout the course of this month in effectively and successfully steering the activities of the Security Council. I speak on behalf of the three African members of the Council, and would like to focus on the African issues that we have dealt with under your presidency.

The briefing that the Council received on 10 August (see S/PV.8022) from Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed on her recent visit to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo — accompanied by the Executive Director of UN-Women, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security — was very important in drawing attention to the plight of women and girls in conflict situations. That joint United Nations-African Union high-level mission, which was the first of its kind, also served to highlight the cooperation and partnership between the two organizations in advancing the women and peace and security agenda in Africa. We believe that agenda should be welcomed and encouraged.

We also attach importance to the oral briefing that we received on 15 August 2017 (see S/PV.8024) on the activities undertaken over the past two months since the adoption of resolution 2359 (2017) in order to operationalize the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force. The funding gap will be a major challenge, as it hampers the full operationalization of the Joint Force. We believe that there is an urgent need to mobilize international support for the Force. No doubt, the multi-faceted challenges facing the Sahel region can be effectively addressed only through a comprehensive strategy that encompasses security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues. Therefore, the rapid and effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, as called for in resolution 2359 (2017), is absolutely critical. We hope that countries of the region, in cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners, will redouble their efforts in implementing the Strategy.

In the light of the current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we appreciate the briefing (see S/PV.8026) we received from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) on the activities of the Committee. We commend the work that the Committee and its Group of Experts have been doing in trying to address the many difficult and complex challenges facing the Democratic Republic of Congo and to promote peace and stability in the country.

In that regard, the continuous efforts being made to consult with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the countries of the region, including in the context of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, as well as to forge greater synergy and cooperation with other regional and international partners, is commendable. The presence of the families of Ms. Zaida Catalán and Mr. Michael Sharp, the two members of the Group of Experts who were mercilessly killed while on duty, was the highlight of the meeting. The Council's support and follow-up for the efforts to bring the perpetrators of that heinous crime to justice are absolutely important.

In that regard, the briefing on the report of the Board of Inquiry that was tasked with establishing the facts in relation to the tragic killing of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp was very useful. We hope that its recommendations will be looked at seriously so as to avoid similar tragic incidents in the future. We wish to reiterate that everything should be done and no stone should be left unturned to get to the bottom of who the criminals might be and how that dastardly and unspeakable crime was committed. We must also stress how critical it is to work in partnership with the Government to achieve the desired result, and we express our confidence that the Government will do whatever it takes to help bring the killers to justice.

The security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains a source of concern, and the briefing

we received on 24 August was not encouraging (see S/PV.8030). All parties should cease hostilities and stop obstructions to humanitarian operations. It is important that the Council supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) high-level Revitalization Forum as the clearest path towards peace in South Sudan, urged all parties to fully participate in the Forum and called on IGAD to convene it expeditiously.

The continued political impasse in Guinea-Bissau and the lack of progress on the implementation of the Conakry Agreement is another source of concern. We welcome the recent visit by the Chair of Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) and by the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau, including their series of engagements with various stakeholders. There is an urgent need to overcome the impasse to create conditions for the holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

The centrality of the Conakry Agreement to sustain peace, security and development in Guinea-Bissau cannot be overemphasized. We reiterate our call for all stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau to respect and comply with the Conakry Agreement in addressing the differences in the challenges facing the country. We believe that the concerted efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau also remain indispensable in finding a durable solution to the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. We also underline the significant role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau in ensuring the stability of the country. We urge all international partners to continue to extend the necessary support to address the financial difficulties faced by the Mission in continuing to implement its mandate.

The holding of a peaceful and credible election will mark a significant milestone for Liberia in its democratic transition to peacebuilding and peacebuilding endeavours. The briefing we received on the preparations for the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in Liberia, in line with resolution 2333 (2016), was useful for closely following the developments in the country. We note the start of the election campaign process and stress the need for Liberian political parties to remain committed to the Farmington River Declaration, which they signed on 4 June, in order to facilitate the conducting of peaceful and violence-free elections to pave the way for a successful democratic transition.

We commend the extensive engagement and follow-up of the Peacebuilding Commission in ensuring the smooth transition of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and developing the capacity of the Government of Liberia. Moreover, we encourage the cooperation among UNMIL, ECOWAS, the Manor River Union, the African Union and other relevant organizations in supporting the transition. We also urge international partners to continue to extend the necessary support to Liberia at such important juncture in its transition.

With regard to the situation in Libya, we welcome the appointment of Special Representative of Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé. We appreciate his briefing (see S/PV.8032) on his recent initial consultations with all Libyan stakeholders. We also commend the work done by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) under the leadership of Ambassador Olof Skoog, as well as the by Panel of Experts on the monitoring and implementation of the sanctions regime.

The need to reinvigorate an inclusive political process under the auspices of the United Nations to address the contentious issues in the Libyan Political Agreement is very well recognized. While it is the primary responsibility of the Libyan actors to achieve an inclusive and comprehensive political solution, the continued and coordinated efforts of the neighbouring countries and regional organizations and the United Nations remain critical to achieving durable peace and stability. In that regard, we support the continued endeavours of the African Union high-level political committee to foster national reconciliation in Libya. We also look forward to the upcoming African Union high-level committee and the quartet meetings in Brazzaville and New York, respectively, which would help to further enhance and harmonize international assistance for the people of Libya.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on a successful presidency during the month of August. I would like to touch upon two issues today, namely, North Korea and the revision of presidential note S/2010/507.

First, with regard to North Korea, the Security Council adopted resolution 2371 (2017) on 5 August in response to the two ballistic-missile launches with intercontinental range in July. All Members of the United Nations must demonstrate renewed commitment to rigorously and thoroughly implementing the existing Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2371 (2017). In addition, just yesterday, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/16) that strongly condemns the most recent missile launch by North Korea, which flew over Japan. The statement demonstrates the unity of the Security Council and sends a strong and clear message that North Korea should immediately cease such provocative actions. We urge North Korea to abide by this international call.

Secondly, on the revision of presidential note 507, as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that the Council has just agreed on a revision of the note by consensus. The Security Council held an open debate on the working methods of the Council in July of last year, during Japan's presidency, (see S/PV.7740), and listened closely to the voices of not only Council members, but also the broader United Nations membership in order to identify areas that would benefit from adjustments.

Having collected some useful ideas and proposals from that debate, we explored them in the Working Group in the process of reviewing and updating presidential note 507 over the subsequent months. As I said a few hours ago, the Council agreed on a revised note 507 after undertaking a series of textual negotiations starting in May. Thanks to the contributions of the members of the Working Group, I believe that the agreed revision represents a comprehensive and balanced text that can serve as a useful handbook on the agreed measures or best practices on working methods of the Council. Let me highlight a few points on the main revisions in some detail in order to address the interests of the broader membership.

In terms of the overall structure and content, the revised note consolidates, streamlines and restructures presidential note 507, of 2010, and all 13 other stand-alone presidential notes, including the most recent one (S/2016/619), concerning preparing newly elected members, as well as the selection process and preparation of Chairs of subsidiary bodies.

In addition, among others, the revised note includes the following new elements.

On the monthly programme of work, incoming presidencies are encouraged to discuss the programme with other Council members well in advance of their respective presidencies.

On informal consultations, the note refers to additional measures, such as encouraging briefers to be succinct and direct, making more effective use of "Other matters" to raise issues of concern by signalling the intention at least one day in advance, and encouraging presidencies to suggest elements to the press at the end of consultations.

On the drafting process of outcome documents of the Council, the note refers to co-penholdership, including taking into account the expertise and/or contributions of Council members on the subject, encouraging at least one round of face-to-face discussions with all members of the Council in an inclusive manner, providing sufficient time for consideration before the silence procedure, and making the documents focused, succinct and action-oriented.

On dialogue with non-Council members and bodies, the note refers for the first time to the importance of annual joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, as well as to consideration of joint missions of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to address conflict situations in Africa.

The note also refers to the Council members' intention to regularly request, deliberate on and draw upon the specific, strategic and targeted advice of the Peacebuilding Commission.

On Security Council missions, the note refers to additional elements concerning their value, as well as aspects related to preparation, itineraries and follow-up.

I believe that the revised product is full of very useful ideas for enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, inclusivity and transparency of the Council, if implemented appropriately, especially during our respective presidencies. While the codification of best practices is a useful exercise, it is not an end in itself. What is most important is implementation and the actual practice of the Council. It is my hope that this revised note will be utilized as an important basis

for continuing to make further improvements in the working methods through the daily work of the Council.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): As we consider the Security Council's work in August, I congratulate you, Mr. President, and your Mission on a successful presidency.

I turn first to the issue of North Korea, which, in a sense, has bookended the month. We saw a strong example of Security Council unity in early August, and then an alarming reminder of the North Korean threat just this week. The Council came together on the first Saturday of August (see S/PV.8019) for the unanimous adoption of resolution 2371 (2017), which sends a stark message to the North Korean dictatorship: they will pay a price for the aggression and arrogance of continuing their prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. With our action, the Council also reminded all United Nations States Memabers that they must rigorously enforce this newest resolution, which includes the single-largest economic sanctions package ever levelled against the North Korean regime, as well as all previous Security Council resolutions.

With its behaviour in recent days, however, North Korea's leaders have made it crystal clear that they are not yet ready to abandon their dangerous path. Twelve members of the Council alone are within reach of their missiles, and I would remind my colleagues that North Korean has proven it is not beholden to friendships and alliances. Even as we rightly celebrate the adoption of resolution 2371 (2017), we must recognize that North Korea will persist in its behaviour, as evidenced by Monday's highly provocative launch over Japan.

Last night, the Council once again unanimously condemned North Korea by adopting presidential statement S/PRST/2017/16). There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the Council will not acquiesce, but will continue to increase pressure on the regime and seek to change North Korea's path.

Turning to the issue of sanctions more generally, I commend your Mission, Mr. President, for its work this month in holding a briefing (see S/PV.8018) to consider the design and effectiveness of United Nations sanctions. We also held meetings on the sanctions regimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.8026), Guinea-Bissau (see S/PV.8031) and Libya (see S/PV.8032). Taken together, those meetings show that, when the Council speaks with one voice to implement and enforce sanctions, we demonstrate our capacity to promote and protect international peace and security. When we do not speak with one voice we undermine both the effectiveness of sanctions as a tool and the credibility of the Security Council. However, Council unity is not an end goal. When the Council is unwilling or unable to enforce or enact sanctions, the United States will take action, including unilateral sanctions, to defend ourselves, our allies or our values. I urge Council members to boost their efforts to effectively use this important tool.

I also thank you, Mr. President, for holding in open Chamber the briefing by the Chair of the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which allowed the families of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán to participate. I encourage my colleagues on the Council to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to immediately establish, under his authority, an independent investigation into the deaths of those two experts.

Yesterday's open debate considered the issue of peacekeeping operations in the larger context of sustaining peace (see S/PV.8033), and we welcomed the opportunity to discuss how that fits into a broader vision for peacekeeping reform. Looking ahead, we will have another opportunity to consider peacekeeping reform at Ethiopia's Council meeting next month during high-level week. I understand that a draft resolution will be adopted at that meeting, and I urge Council members to produce a strong text that reinforces peacekeeping effectiveness and efficiency and allows us to better assess performance. While we support the efforts of the African Union (AU) to increase financial self-reliance, I would remind my colleagues that the AU must take more steps on that front before we are ready to enshrine any decisions in a resolution.

I also wish to highlight the Council's upcoming visit next week to Addis Ababa for consultations with the AU Peace and Security Council. That annual dialogue affords the Security Council an important opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the AU and to further United Nations-African Union cooperation. In that regard, I thank you, Mr. President, for your steady and professional leadership of the Council this month.

Finally, I also wish to commend our Japanese colleague for his Mission's excellent work on the revision of the note by the President contained in document S/2010/507, which was adopted earlier

today. The revision goes a long way to improving the Council's working methods and contributes to the Council's effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. I congratulate Japan for its tireless and successful efforts on this important matter.

In conclusion, we offer our support to Ethiopia as its delegation takes up the gavel in the month of September.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council's agenda this month was quite full. I would like to thank you personally, Mr. President, as well as your entire delegation, for the effective and skilful way in which you discharged your duties as President. Your presidency was so good that we did not notice the month's passing.

We would like to note that the Egyptian initiatives were very topical. I refer in particular to the Security Council meeting on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons (see S/PV. 8017) and the resolution we adopted to that end (resolution 2370 (2017)). Our discussion of this topic showed yet again that it is necessary to adopt more stringent weapons-control mechanisms, as weapons still manage to fill the arsenals of a number of terrorist organizations almost without hindrance.

The discussion on general issues of sanctions once again allowed us to outline the issues in this area. Despite certain differences of opinion, the majority of members of the Council spoke in favour of further improving our sanctions tools in order to make them more effective and ensure that the humanitarian cost is as low as possible. It is also important that it has been stated very loudly and clearly that unilateral interpretations of sanctions are unacceptable, as is the adoption of supplementary unilateral restrictions. When it comes to reaffirming that there is no alternative the political settlement of conflicts, the open debate on the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in undertaking peacebuilding tasks and sustaining peace (see S/PV.8033) was quite useful.

We also saw in August another resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (resolution 2371 (2017)), which introduced unprecedented, strict economic restrictions on that country. We are convinced that the possibility of exerting further sanctions pressure on Pyongyang has now been exhausted. We cannot support the idea of economically suffocating North Korea and its people. We need to concentrate on the political track. There is no alternative to the political settlement of all of the issues in the Korean peninsula. This point was reiterated in the presidential statement of 29 August 2017 (S/PRST/2017/16).

Our discussions of Middle East issues showed that the time is more right now than ever to take practical measures to overcome the impasse in the Israeli-Palestinian cluster of issues, which is key to resolving many other issues in the region. In the Syrian conflict, after de-escalation areas were created, we have noticed positive developments there. In those areas and in other local truce areas, we are witnessing a return to normal life. Demining is being carried out, transport links are being restored, the economic infrastructure is being rebuilt, people are returning to their homes — all of which enables us to concentrate on fighting terrorism. We think that it is important to reinforce those trends, which meet the preconditions necessary for moving forward in the intra-Syrian dialogue in Geneva. We supported the Egyptian presidency's proposal to optimize Council meetings on Syrian issues.

We note that there is positive and constructive interaction among all Lebanese political forces, through which the country managed to break out of its prior political stagnation. We think that all of the issues on the country's national agenda, including those issues related to security, need in future to be addressed in a legal framework through dialogue among all the forces in the country. We support the work being carried out by United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

As to the critical situation in Yemen, in particular the humanitarian aspects, additional measures by the United Nations are needed in order to make sure that there is unimpeded humanitarian access to all areas of the country. We need to exert pressure on all sides to the conflict. It is only through an immediate, all-encompassing ceasefire without preconditions that a resumption of the political processes will be possible. The resolution of the crisis in Yemen should be found in the political sphere.

Also, in keeping with tradition, we discussed African issues. The meetings on that topic confirmed that African problems should have African solutions. Furthermore, the idea that violating a State's sovereignty or interfering in its internal affairs is unacceptable remains axiomatic.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank our Egyptian colleagues and to wish every success to the delegation of Ethiopia, which will take up the gavel in September.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and Egypt, for your and your Mission's able stewardship in the month of August, which was less quiet than expected, and for deciding to convene a formal wrap-up session.

I will focus on two overarching horizontal issues that were featured prominently during the month, namely, non-proliferation and terrorism.

On non-proliferation, at the beginning of August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2371 (2017), sending once again an unequivocal message of unity from the international community. By strongly condemning North Korea's increasing provocations, we showed our determination to confront this new level of threat to international peace and security by taking further action. The resolution, adopted on 5 August, provides for the broadest, most comprehensive set of sanctions applied by the Security Council in decades.

As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), we are committed to ensuring the full and effective implementation of all relevant measures. We are continuing efforts in that regard by reaching out to the entire United Nations membership to ensure that the latest measures are understood and applied quickly and comprehensively. I would also like to recall that we are also committed to ensuring, as reaffirmed in resolution 2371 (2017) itself, that the sanctions regime should not have a negative effect on the humanitarian situation in the country and that the sanctions remain a tool in a broader strategy aimed at the peaceful political resolution of the issue.

In any case, the most recent ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which Italy condemns in the strongest terms, confirmed the need for the Council to remain alert on this very sensitive issue. The swift adoption yesterday of presidential statement S/PRST/2017/16, following consultations, confirms once again the Council's unity on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea file.

On terrorism, the recent attack in Barcelona, Spain, in which citizens from more than 30 countries were affected — including Italy — reminds us of the global nature of this scourge. The Egyptian presidency rightly made counter-terrorism a priority during this month, as only collective solutions can tackle this challenge. Early in the month, the Council adopted resolution 2370 (2017), on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. It is a substantial step forward, in our view, in the international community's commitment to combating the illegal trafficking in weapons, which represents a threat to peace and security and undermines the stability of State institutions. We look forward to meeting the new Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in September to discuss how the United Nations and the international community can comprehensively tackle terrorism and violent extremism.

I also want to briefly highlight that this month the Council received the first briefing by the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé (see S/PV.8032). Significantly, Mr. Salamé delivered his briefing via video-conference from Tripoli, thereby showing his commitment to work as much as possible in Libya. The Council confirmed its full support of Mr. Salamé and his first initiatives in that role, thereby injecting new momentum into the political process and the central mediation role of the United Nations. During the briefing, a number of delegations, including Italy, also raised the issue of migration and the need to address it using a comprehensive approach.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the Council's working methods. Under the able leadership of Japan, and as Ambassador Koro Bessho just reminded us, the Council has completed the revision of Note by the President S/2010/507, on working methods. The new note represents a significant step forward in the constant improvement of the working methods, the transparency and the accountability of this organ. Of course, as Ambassador Bessho also mentioned, daily practice of what has been agreed will make the true difference, as I mentioned during the meeting on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon meeting (see S/PV.8037). In that respect, allow me to draw members' attention to the need for negotiations among Council members — in particular when renewing peacekeeping mandates — to be conducted in the most inclusive and transparent way possible, and for the need to give due consideration to the positions of troop-contributing countries and of the countries hosting peacekeeping missions.

In conclusion, Mr. President, congratulations again on your presidency. We look forward to a busy and productive month of September under the presidency of Ambassador Tekeda Alemu and the Ethiopian team.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Bolivia congratulates you and your entire team, Mr. President, on the efficient and professional conduct of the work of the Security Council during the month of August. We had a very busy month, in particular this last week, however, it was also a very productive month in which the Security Council dealt with very important issues for international peace and security.

Among the month's topics that we wish to highlight is the open briefing on sanctions, held on 3 August (see S/PV.8018), during which members of the Security Council were able to express their views on that vitally important issue, which has implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. The need for sanctions, their implementation, their effectiveness and even when they should be lifted were some of the points that Council members discussed during the meeting. For our part, we reiterate that sanctions should not be an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Sanctions are one of the Council's tools for the maintenance of peace and security, and should be among the last to be used. In that connection, we categorically reject the imposition of unilateral sanctions. Such actions not only constitute a flagrant violation of international law, but also undermine the efforts and work of multilateral bodies such as ours — as they extend domestic jurisdiction and legislation from one State to another, thereby violating the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Still on the issue of sanctions, this month the Council adopted new sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We believe that they should serve as an instrument to achieve dialogue among the parties, with the ultimate goal of denuclearizing of the Korean peninsula. The Security Council has demonstrated great unity during this month in adopting resolution 2371 (2017) and, yesterday, presidential statement S/PRST/2017/16. That unity must serve to achieve a peaceful political solution to the conflict. We must support all efforts that have been presented by some Council members to that end. A military conflict cannot be one of the options, as it would have unimaginable consequences.

We are living through the worst humanitarian crisis since 1945. This month the Council addressed the current situation in various countries in crisis, such as Yemen (see S/PV.8027), where, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, more than 20 million people require humanitarian assistance, 17 million people are food insecure, more than 2 million are internally displaced and 280,000 are refugees. Similarly, South Sudan, a country that the Council often discusses, also faces a complicated humanitarian situation, since almost 50 per cent of the population requires humanitarian assistance.

We would also like to note the initiative of Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and of the Egyptian delegation in convening the open briefing on sexual violence on 10 August (see S/PV.8022). The field visit by the Deputy Secretary-General is very important for laying the foundation for collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union in order to promote the participation of women in peace processes. Gender equality is critical to building sustainable peace processes. We hope that such visits can be replicated in other regions in coordination with other regional and subregional organizations.

We would also like to underline the thematic continuity of the Council in recent months under various presidencies. For example, in June, we held an open briefing on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (see S/PV.7971); in July, under the Chinese presidency, we held an open debate on improving African capabilities in the area of peace and security (see S/PV.8006); and just yesterday, we held an open debate on peacekeeping and peacebuilding (see S/PV.8033). Next month we will hold an open debate on peacekeeping operations. We hope that this thematic continuity will enrich the debate between the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union during next week's joint consultative meeting between the two bodies.

Finally, Bolivia would also like to join others in commending His Excellency Ambassador Koro Bessho of Japan for his work in revising note by the President S/2010/507. We also express our full support to the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia, which will assume the presidency of the Council in September. We pledge our full support to its team and are confident that they will do excellent work.

Mr. Ilnytskyi (Ukraine): We appreciate this opportunity to discuss, in open Chamber, the work of the Security Council in August. Since Ukraine presided over the Security Council during the month of February, this is only the second time this year that the

Security Council has held such a briefing. We welcome the return of formal wrap-up sessions and hope that future presidencies will revive this practice, which is in keeping with the implementation presidential note (S/2010/507).

We also thank you personally, Mr. President, and commend the Egyptian delegation for fulfilling the responsibilities of the presidency throughout the month in a transparent and professional manner. Despite the fact that August is usually a rather slow month, this year it was quite packed. We had several important discussions and adopted a number of truly landmark resolutions.

At the outset of the Egyptian presidency, the Council adopted resolution 2370 (2017), on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. Considering the spread of terrorism around the world today, as well as the significant involvement of certain States in supporting terrorist activities abroad, we commend the Egyptian delegation for coming forward with that initiative, which was very timely. We expect that, having unanimously adopted the resolution, all Council members have already begun to respect their obligation not to support and supply terrorists with weapons. Failure to do so will undoubtedly have grave consequences, and violators will pay a price for their transgressions. In that regard, it is critical that the Council follow closely how the resolution is being implemented, thereby making yet another tangible contribution to international efforts to combat that scourge.

Another subject that we discussed in early August was sanctions. It is no secret that there is a plethora of views on the subject — from rejecting the legitimacy of such a tool to overblown expectations that through sanctions anything can be achieved. The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle. Ukraine is convinced that sanctions can and do work, when and if implemented in good faith by all members of the international community. We have to remember that sanctions' effectiveness depends on their thorough implementation by all stakeholders without exception. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Therefore, it is a joint moral duty of all responsible members of the United Nations family to work towards preventing the obstruction and evasion of existing sanctions regimes. Otherwise, the whole international endeavour will be undermined, and the very idea of sanctions will be gradually discredited. In that regard, specialized and regional international organizations can play an important role in ensuring the proper implementation of sanctions. The use of additional measures and organizations' own specific instruments to better respond to breaches of the peace and other grave violations of international law is an essential part of the international toolbox in that area.

In August, the Council adopted resolution 2371 (2017), an important resolution that introduced additional sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It was a difficult, but nonetheless unavoidable step, since the Council has a duty to ensure accountability for actions that violate established international norms and principles. North Korea's behaviour in advancing its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes is nothing other than one of the most vivid examples of blatant violations of the international law. Besides engaging in misguided and reckless efforts to establish its own nuclear arsenal instead of improving the living conditions of its people, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea spares no effort to find new ways to circumvent established restrictions and prohibitions. The gravity of the situation was highlighted by the recent ballistic missile launch by North Korea, and we welcomed yesterday's unanimous and firm reaction of the Council, which culminated in the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2017/16.

The international community must work diligently to thwart and penalize any attempt to undermine the existing legally binding arrangements in the nuclear sphere. Without a resolute stance on that issue, there is little hope for the eventual eradication of the global threat of weapons of mass destruction. As one of the champions of the global non-proliferation regime, Ukraine will continue to contribute to international efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which is essential to removing the risk of unnecessary provocations and curbing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's misguided nuclear and missile ambitions.

Returning to the agenda item of our meeting today, I welcome the agreement of Council members on the revised and updated version of presidential note (S/2010/507) on working methods. Our congratulations go to the delegation of Japan and all the members of the Council for their constructive efforts in preparing and negotiating the text. The presidential note adopted today will serve as an important guideline for the Council to make its work more efficient and transparent.

In conclusion, I congratulate you, Sir, on your successful presidency. To to our Ethiopian colleagues, who have a rare privilege and responsibility of the greatest importance in directing the Council's work in September, with Heads of State and Government meeting in New York, I would like to convey our full support.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, and your team on having conducted the work of the Security Council so efficiently during this month. At the same time, we predict a successful presidency for Ethiopia for the month of September and express our full support in its endeavour.

Moreover, we thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this formal wrap-up session following a month of very intensive work. Uruguay appreciates and recognizes the importance of these formal wrap-up meetings, which allow for the positions of all Council members to be officially recorded and promote the transparency and accountability of this organ. As everyone knows, Uruguay also encourages the holding of informal and interactive meetings of the Security Council with States that are not members of this organ, thereby allowing us to enrich our work with their contributions and improve our work. Concerning the Council meetings held this past month, I would like to focus my attention on those in which humanitarian concerns were the priority issue and to which Uruguay attaches exceptional importance.

One such issue of special significance was addressed at the Council meeting of 10 August, on peace and security in Africa (see S/PV.8022). At that meeting, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed the Council on her recent visit to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during which she was joined by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. That high-level mission focused exclusively on women and peace and security, and development, while according particular attention to the women and girls most affected by conflict.

Uruguay considers it essential to promote the equality, the empowerment and the well-being of women if peace is to be established and sustained in areas of conflict, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000) and, more recently, with resolution 2242 (2015). It is crucial to emphasize the importance and symbolism of this type of visit, which besides signifying the paramount importance of the women and peace and security agenda, encourages the visited countries to move forward in the protection of women, who in conflict situations are exceptionally vulnerable, as well as to include them in Government bodies and allow for their participation in post-conflict situations and peace processes. Supporting them has proved to be fundamental. Uruguay would also like to point out that briefings should be held more frequently to provide information on the situation of women in connection with the main conflicts on our agenda, including inviting representatives of civil society so that they can familiarize us with their point of view.

Another agenda item that I would like to bring up involves Syria. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council this morning on the current situation in Syria (see S/PV.8036). Once again, we are facing a gloomy humanitarian landscape affecting the Syrian people with unprecedented cruelty. Although violence in the country has been significantly reduced thanks to the Astana agreements and the most recent ceasefire agreements in the south-west of the country, the humanitarian situation has not improved. That tragic truth demands our effective action. We continue to impassively watch the destruction of a people — the interminable losses of valuable human lives, millions of people deprived of food and the most essential services, hundreds of thousands of orphans and hungry children, women suffering from sexual violence, chemical attacks on the civilian population, hospitals and schools destroyed by constant shelling and the lack of humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas where millions of people live.

Concerning children, we reiterate that the violence and deprivation they have been facing will seriously affect their physical and psychological development. It is unfortunate that the Council has not found a more or less durable way to alleviate that difficult situation. We are reminded that we must not abandon our efforts to find optiond for resolving that humanitarian tragedy.

With respect to Yemen, which has been characterized as the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world, we thank this month's presidency for convening an informational briefing (see S/PV.8027), followed by consultations on the situation in that country, which in most cases is addressed only under the latter format. On that occasion, it was emphasized that millions of

Yemenis today face a triple tragedy: the spectre of famine, the greatest outbreak of cholera in a year, and the failures and injustice generated by a brutal conflict that the world has allowed to continue but which is completely avoidable. Added to that are the blockades of sea, land and air ports to civilian traffic, preventing access into the country of essential imports, including food, fuel and medical supplies and their distribution throughout the territory. Civilians continue to pay the price of a long conflict and military clashes are spreading across several provinces of the country. We are also grateful to the Senegalese delegation for organizing, on 21 August, an Arria Formula meeting on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We know that this type of informal meeting also enhances the visibility of the issue.

In conclusion, Uruguay believes that the Council has another fundamental responsibility, which is to not allow grievous crimes committed against a defenceless civilian population to remain unpunished. It is inadmissible to promote a climate of impunity. The Security Council must continue to refer cases to the International Criminal Court, as appropriate, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation and to congratulate the representative of Japan for having lucidly led the negotiations on presidential note S/2010/507, in order to improve our working methods.

Mr. Vaverka (Sweden): I congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on the professional and efficient manner in which you have conducted the Council's work over this past month. It has been a busy month and, looking back, there are four items from the programme of work that I would like to briefly reflect upon.

First, we were very pleased that the Council, on 9 August, was able to unanimously agree an ambitious presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/14) on the risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria. The statistics regarding the humanitarian situation in those countries are alarming and completely unacceptable. Sweden decided to propose a presidential statement to build on the consensus from the Arria Formula meeting on famines, which was organized by eight Council members in June. We did so as we considered that there was a need for a unified, concrete and comprehensive statement by the Council in support of the efforts of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, and the leadership of the Secretary-General. We also believed that it was important that the Council highlight the need to do more to prevent the conflicts that are driving many of these humanitarian crises, as well as the need for more humanitarian funding and unhindered humanitarian access. I thank all Council members for their constructive cooperation on the presidential statement. We now look forward to the Secretary-General's briefing to the Security Council in October, and to more regular reporting on the links between famine and conflict.

Secondly, turning to some of the country-specific items on the agenda, our meeting (S/PV.8026) on the final report (S/2017/672/Rev.1) of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) was of particular importance to us. From a Swedish standpoint, that meeting came to centre on the unacceptable murder of the two experts, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp. I would like to thank Council members for their solidarity with the families attending that meeting. Now that the United Nations Board of Inquiry into the murders has delivered its findings and recommendations, we welcome the Secretary-General's determination to pursue a further investigation. We owe it not only to the families, but also to ourselves and the Organization to make sure that those responsible for these reprehensible murders are brought to justice. We count on continuing support in that endeavour.

Thirdly, following the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile on 28 July, and the resulting heightened tensions in the region, the North Korean nuclear issue has taken up much of our attention this month. We came together once again yesterday (see S/PV.8034) in response to another missile launch, this time over Japan. While those recent launches — demonstrating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued non-compliance and disregard for Security Council resolutions — remain of serious concern, it was important that the Council was able to act quickly, by adopting resolution 2371 (2017) earlier in the month and yesterday's presidential statement S/PRST/2017/16. This demonstrates that the Council stands united and determined to deal with the growing threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile programmes. However, sanctions alone will not resolve the situation on the Korean Peninsula, but

must be accompanied by creative diplomacy, dialogue and confidence-building measures.

Fourthly and finally, this morning we heard from Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien on the situation in Syria (S/PV.8036), which remains deeply troubling.

As co-penholders for the humanitarian track, Sweden stands ready to initiate meaningful Council action that could complement existing Council products, with the aim of improving the situation for Syrians on the ground. The reduction of hostilities seen in parts of Syria needs to be consolidated and civilians protected. Humanitarian access must now be expanded. Finally, we regret that the Council remains unable to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. The crimes of the past six years cannot go unpunished.

Before concluding, allow me to pay tribute to Japan for its diligent work and excellent stewardship on the revision of presidential note S/2010/507 on the Council's working methods, which was agreed today. The note is an invaluable tool for enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Council, while ensuring the consistency and predictability of the Council's work.

Let me conclude by once again thanking you, Mr. President, and the Egyptian delegation for your work this month and wishing the Ethiopian delegation every success for its presidency in September.

Mr. Melki (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to join all Council members in congratulating the Egyptian presidency on its extraordinary work during the recent month. Mr. President, you have organized the Council's work with rigour, transparency and effectiveness, while at the same time allowing the necessary flexibility to adapt our programme of work, on the one hand, to the many breaking news events at the international level, as illustrated by the recent events in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar, and on the other hand, to address the concerns of individual Council members, for example with respect to the Central African Republic. Moreover, you have steered the Council's work based on a clear understanding of our shared priorities in matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security, and an acute awareness of the Council's responsibility. We warmly thank you.

I would like to underscore a number of issues that were of particular importance for France in this month's full and variegated agenda. Yesterday's open debate on peacekeeping and sustaining peace (see S/PV.8033) allowed for further reflection on the means with which the United Nations can be more effective on the ground. Accordingly, sustaining peace will be contingent on our work in several areas, including disarmament, reform of the security sector, justice and the settlement of local conflicts. It is incumbent upon the Security Council to best mold that work to tailored mandates. Sustainable peace also depends on the those involved in peacekeeping operations to be able to react to challenges in a coordinated manner among the Host State, regional organizations, bilateral partners, and economic and development actors. The convergence of such actors is therefore essential.

Concerning the Council's work in connection with Africa, the meeting (see S/PV.8022) that brought us together with the Deputy Secretary-General, whose commitment we commend, demonstrated how the United Nations can promote the role of women in promoting peace and security on the ground. We welcome the importance accorded to that subject, which will be the topic of an annual open debate during our presidency in October.

As early as the second day of your presidency (see S/PV.8016), Sir, we adopted a firm presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/13) on Burundi, which focused the unity of the Council on that crisis and showed our determined support for the East African Community, President Mkapa's road map and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Burundi, and particularly recalled the absolute need to respect the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi to ensure its stability. France sincerely hopes that Burundi will take advantage of this opportunity so as to re-establish an eased relationship with the international community, launch a political process that will allow for the peaceful holding of the elections and end human rights violations.

On 15 August, the Security Council held a briefing (see S/PV.8024) on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) joint force in accordance with resolution 2359 (2017), adopted in June. Following the terrorist attacks on Burkina Faso that also targeted the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the previous day, that meeting allowed us once again to underscore the transnational nature of the terrorist threat facing the Sahel and to move forward the work of the G-5 Sahel

so as to ensure the joint force's deployment on the ground according to the agreed timeline. We welcome the fact that much has already been done in a very short time. With regard to that issue, our conviction remains more than ever that the international community has a moral and political responsibility to help African States to come together to combat terrorism through means complementary to those of peacekeeping operations. Along with a large majority of Council members, France continues to believe that United Nations support for the G-5 Sahel joint force is essential.

The Council also held an important meeting (see S/PV.8026) on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the presence of the families of the two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2293 (2016) who were killed in March. Their work, mandated by us, had been outstanding. It is important that the Council pay tribute to their memory. Henceforth, every effort must be made in shedding light on those murders. We reiterate our call that the Secretary-General assemble as quickly as possible, as is within his authority, a special mechanism of inquiry enabling the appropriate judicial authorities to carry out an effective follow-up.

Concerning the Middle East, the Council has also been very active. Despite a divergence in approaches, through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2373 (2017), only moments ago, we renewed the ambitious and robust mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for one year. That was an essential step towards maintaining the stability of southern Lebanon and the entire region.

Concerning Libya, the first briefing (see S/PV.8032) by the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, allowed us to follow up the new impetus that has been infused in United Nations mediation efforts. The unity of the Council will be decisive in our ensuring together a stable future and a safe and prosperous environment in Libya in line with international and regional initiatives and those of neighbouring countries. In July, our Permanent Representative presented to members of Council the outcomes of the Celle-Saint-Cloud meeting, which strives to work coherently towards those same ends. The Council will play an active role in following up the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Libyan stakeholders themselves.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya will be the key component of that process, and it will be necessary to ensure that the Mission be provided with the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. I would like to also commend the work of Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya and its Swedish chairmanship, which, in particular included on its sanctions list two vessels for trafficking in petroleum.

With regard to Yemen, the briefing (see S/PV.8027) by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the subsequent Arria Formula meeting on humanitarian issues stressed the need to enable unimpeded humanitarian access and to stop the serious violations of international humanitarian law. On that occasion, the Council was also able to call for relaunching the political process — given that there can only be a political solution to the situation in Yemen — and to commend the commitment of Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed who is pursuing his work despite constraints.

Concerning Syria, a majority among us has repeatedly called for safe, full, immediate and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance for all those in circumstances that remain catastrophic. We met this morning (see S/PV.8036) to discuss the issue of Syria, and France recalled its efforts to supporting the United Nations-led process towards achieving a democratic and negotiated transition in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). That is the only option, which will allow for the lasting return of peace and for effectively combating terrorism, which is our first priority. We are seeing convergences today. We will spare no effort, in particular from now to the week of high-level meetings of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session so as to find a way out of that crisis.

Lastly, this synopsis would not be complete without mentioning North Korea on which the Council showed its responsiveness and firmness yesterday (see S/PV.8034).

In concluding, I would like to join all those who have commended the outstanding work of Japan on presidential note (S/2010/507) from which we will all benefit as members of the Council in the future. Concerning all of these issues, as well as many others, the work that remains to be done is immense, but you, Sir, over the past month, have made a considerable

contribution to that work in sparing neither your resolve or efforts. And we thank you for that.

Mr. Cheng Lie (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the convening of this meeting by the Egyptian presidency and appreciates the Egyptian delegation's successful leadership of the Security Council, marked by its positive achievements, for the month of August.

With regard to the Council's work this month, I would like to focus on the following three issues.

First, concerning peace and security, the Council convened an open debate on peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see S/PV.8033). Member States exchanged views in a comprehensive manner on United Nations-led efforts related to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. China calls for firmly upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, developing a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation at its core, fostering a new, shared, comprehensive and cooperative security vision, and maximizing the role of the United Nations as the core mechanism for maintaining collective security.

In recent years, the African Union (AU) has vigorously promoted solidarity and unity among African countries in the search of peace and development with substantive progress. China hopes that the United Nations and AU will fully implement the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for Enhancing Partnership on Peace and Security to enhance cooperation in areas, such as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.

Secondly concerning hotspots in Africa, the Security Council considered such issues as Somalia (see S/PV.8035), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.8026) and the Sahel region (see S/PV.8024), listened to the relevant briefings and adopted resolution 2372 (2017) on the extension of the mandate of African Union Mission in Somalia. Such efforts help better inform the international community of developments on the ground so that the United Nations and the world community, in general, can lend further assistance to the relevant countries. China wishes to express its appreciation.

The international community should stay the course of political settlements of hotspot issues, encourage all relevant parties to find peaceful settlements to disputes through dialogue and negotiations, improve the security situation, and ensure cooperation among various parties within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and regional organizations to generate synergies. China always pursues an Africa policy featuring sincerity, practicality, affinities, good faith, justice and shared interests, and stands ready to work with the international community to foster a peaceful, secure and stable international environment — the main contributions to peace, stability and development in Africa.

With regard to counter-terrorism, this month the Council convened an open meeting (see S/PV.8017) on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons and unanimously adopted resolution 2370 (2017). China hopes that this resolution will encourage the international community to enhance cooperation, adopt an integrated approach and collectively cut off the channels through which terrorist organizations acquire weapons, thereby maintaining international and regional peace and security. Terrorism is the common enemy of mankind.

The international community needs to stick to a single standard, maximize the leading role of the United Nations and the Security Council and abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Member States need to play a role and assume their primary responsibilities in the area of preventing terrorist organizations from acquiring weapons, strengthen effective coordination and conduct international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation to form collaborative synergy to prevent terrorist organizations from acquiring weapons.

In conclusion I wish to express my best wishes in advance for a successful presidency for the month of September.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): My delegation commends the Egyptian presidency for its outstanding leadership with wide coverage of issues on the Council agenda. At today's wrap-up session, we would like to comment on some important items.

First of all, on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we express our solidarity with Japan. Ballistic missiles flew over its territory two days ago, endangering all air and sea vessels, as well as the neighbouring territories. Japan and Kazakhstan have been among the countries most affected by the devastating consequences of nuclear tests and weapons.

We therefore understand the insight and experience of the Government and the people of Japan.

It is worrisome to see today, when we are celebrating together the International Day against Nuclear Tests at United Nations Headquarters, the increasing threat of nuclear weapons. The position of Kazakhstan on non-proliferation and the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is well known and remains consistent. I will just summarize it in a few words: first, condemnation; second, halting of all tests and launches; third, full implementation of United Nations sanctions and directives; fourth, pressure; fifth, no military option, and exercise of restraint; sixth, dialogue and confidence-building measures; seventh, resumption of the six-party talks without delay; eighth, "double freeze" as a possible beginning; and ninth, unity and credibility of the Council.

I shall now turn to the Middle East.

First of all, on Iraq, we in the international community need to be concerned about the proposed referendum on the independence of the Kurdistan region and the Kurd areas outside the administration of the region. We believe it would have negative consequences that could cause further instability.

As regards Syria, the fifth meeting of the Astana process met in our capital on 4 and 5 July. We saw all the stakeholders gathered, including Jordan and the United States, together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. De Mistura. Representatives of the United States and Jordan also participated as observers. We are deeply grateful to all sides for their important contributions. Hopefully, the pending August meeting will be conducted in mid-September. We did hold a technical expert meeting at end of August to finalize the September meeting.

The tireless work of participants in the Astana Process is resulting in gradual but significant progress. Each round of talks yields complete results, which have a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Syrians. The scale and intensity of the conflict have reduced noticeably, and efforts are continuing to create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people in need. We express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. O'Brien, for his noble, tireless and most effective work in the United Nations, inter alia on the Syrian file for the good of all Syrians, and cordially wish him success and all the very best in his future career and life. We also support the practice of joint Council meetings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria and look forward to their continuation.

On Yemen, we are thankful to the Swedish mission for initiating consultations on the situation in Yemen on 18 August (S/PV.8027) and to the Senegalese mission for organizing an Arria Formula meeting on the vital role of the United Nations humanitarian assistance partners in the crisis in Yemen, held on 21 August. Due to the devastating humanitarian situation and the world's worst cholera outbreak we are of the view that the situation in Yemen should remain on the agenda of the Security Council.

On Libya, we were pleased to hear the first briefing in the Security Council of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, on the situation in Libya (S/PV.8032). We express our full support for the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General aimed at bringing lasting peace to Libya, and welcome his energetic engagement with different actors of Libyan society as well as the international community.

On counter-terrorism, my Permanent Representative, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), along with the experts of the Monitoring Team, is currently on a mission to Singapore and Malaysia to gather data on the activities of terrorist groups in the countries where they are now shifting their focus — mainly in South-East Asia, as they have been almost completely driven out of Syria. We intend to cover more countries in the latter part of the year.

Throughout this month, the Council has held two remarkable meetings. The first was the briefing by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, on her mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/PV.8022), which highlighted the importance of focusing on women in all aspects of the work of the Security Council and the United Nations. The significant value of the deliberations demonstrated the importance of having gender as an overarching aspect of all phases of peace and security.

Yesterday, we held another exceptional open debate on sustaining peace as a fundamental element of all peacekeeping work (S/PV.8033). Greater focus on

that would certainly make our efforts more efficient, relevant, timely and more cost-effective, as more is spent on peacekeeping than on early efforts and prevention.

Finally, we also covered several peacekeeping operations mandates. We thank you, Sir, for your vision in streamlining operations and highlighting critical factors for strengthening the Council and enabling it to better fulfil and enhance its mandate.

In conclusion, we thank Japan for its exemplary work on the revised presidential note (S/2010/507), which was adopted in order to improve our working methods. We also express our full support to Ethiopia, the next President of the Council, and wish that delegation all success in that important position.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by offering thanks and congratulations to you, Mr. President, and to all of your team for a very successful month. I would like to join others in praising your effective presidency and leadership and inclusive management of the Council's business throughout August.

Quite often, August has a reputation of being a quiet month, but it has not been quiet at all. This month, there has been absolutely no let up in the activity of the Security Council. And, of course, the most important issue that we have all faced has been North Korea. So, I want to begin with that and how we respond to the repeated violations of Security Council resolutions. Also, like others, I am very glad that we were able to send a strong united message, first of all on 5 August (S/PV.8019), with the new package of sanctions, and secondly, yesterday evening, with presidential statement S/PRST/201/16, condemning the latest atrocities from North Korea. The threat that North Korea poses, not just to its region, but now to the whole world, means that we must remain united and make sure that we respond with clarity and unequivocal condemnation every time there are such violations.

I also want to use this meeting very briefly to focus on three other points that we have tackled this month.

The first is to pay tribute to the men and women around the world who carry out the decisions of the Security Council, often in the most dangerous locations. This month, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported to us on its most recent findings (S/PV.8026). Sadly, it was not a routine briefing because it was in the course of seeking evidence for that report (S/2017/672/Rev.1) that Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were so tragically killed. We were also briefed on the results of the United Nations Board of Inquiry report on their murder, and we look forward to seeing its recommendations implemented in full. The Security Council and the wider United Nations have a responsibility to those that work on our behalf. It is essential that we see a swift, full and transparent investigation into who was responsible for their murders and that the perpetrators be held to account. We call on the Secretary-General to establish a mechanism for further investigation without delay.

My second point is about the links that we have seen this month between conflict and humanitarian crises. The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption this month of presidential statement S/PRST/2017/14, on the devastating famines in South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and north-eastern Nigeria. It is vital that the parties to each of these conflicts respect their obligations to protect civilians and ensure the security of humanitarian operations and personnel. The Security Council must keep up the momentum over the next few months. We look forward to a discussion of these crises during the high-level week and to a briefing from the Secretary-General in October on the deliberate actions that are increasing humanitarian need and the barriers to an effective response.

We were also briefed this month on the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict in the Central African Republic and the dangers that humanitarian workers are facing when trying to deliver aid. The meeting in high-level week on the forthcoming mandate renewal will provide opportunities to reconsider our approach to the Central African Republic.

Finally, the Council has continued its discussion of peacekeeping. I would like to thank Egypt for scheduling yesterday's open debate on the contribution that peacekeeping can make to sustaining peace (see S/PV.8033). The decisions to close the Missions in Haiti, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire have reminded us of the importance of ensuring that peacebuilding is considered throughout the life cycle of a mission, which means ensuring that there is a whole-of-United Nations approach from the beginning and that a mission's strategic objectives are clearly set out at its inception.

I am pleased that this morning we were able to put this into practice and confirm our support for a set of clear strategic objectives in Somalia, when we

unanimously renewed the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (see S/PV.8035). In response to the joint Africa Union-United Nations review, this marks an important shift in emphasis for the Mission, with AMISOM focusing on the transition of tasks to the Somali security forces and a gradual and phased reduction in AMISOM troop numbers.

I once again offer my thanks, Mr. President, for the work over the month, and I wish the very best to Ethiopia for next month, and I thank Japan for all its hard work on working methods.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Security Council for the month of August, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Egypt to the members of the Council, especially to my colleagues, the permanent representatives, to their respective staff and to the Secretariat of the Council, for all the support they have given to us.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Egyptian delegation for their great efforts during our presidency of the Council for this month, without which we would not have been able to achieve as much as we did. Indeed it has been a busy month and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview, most importantly the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (resolution 2373 (2017)) and our presidential statement of yesterday regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (S/PRST/2017/16).

We also held a number of discussions that have contributed to our continued efforts aimed at improving the work of the Council with a view to meeting any challenges to international peace and security, in particular our efforts to counter terrorism, develop sanctions regimes and ensure the contribution of peacekeeping operations to sustaining peace. We could not have done any of this alone and without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat as well as all relevant Conference Services officers, interpreters and translators. I would therefore like to sincerely thank all of them.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council when I wish the delegation of Ethiopia good luck in the month of September.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.